

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

[Read at the Ashland S. S. by Obed Helser.]

Christ cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth." He could have raised Lazarus by a silent exerting of his power and will, and the indiscernable operations of the spirit of life. But he did it by a call, a loud call. 1. To be significant of the power then put forth for the raising of Lazarus; he spake and it was done. He cried aloud to signify the greatness of the work, and the power employed in it, and to excite himself as it were to this attack upon the gates of death; as soldiers engage with a shout.

Speaking to Lazarus, it was proper to cry with a loud voice. The soul of Lazarus, which was to be called back, was at a distance, not hovering about the grave as the Jews fancied. Now it is natural to speak loud when we call to those at a distance. The body of Lazarus which was to be called up was asleep, and we usually speak loud when we call any one out of sleep. It was typical of other works of wonder and particularly other resurrections, which the power of Christ was to effect. This loud call was a figure of the Gospel call, by which dead souls were to be brought out of the graves of sin. By his word, he saith to souls, "live," yea he saith to them, "live." "Arise from the dead."

They who infer from the command "turn and live," that man has power of his own to convert and regenerate himself, might as well infer from this call to Lazarus, that he had power to raise himself to life. This loud call was short, yet mighty through God to the battering down of the strongholds of the grave. First, He calls him by name, Lazarus, as we call those by their names whom we would awake out of a fast sleep. God said to Moses, as a mark of his favor, "I know thee by name." The naming intimates that the same individual person that died, shall rise again at the last day. Secondly, He calls him out of the grave, speaking to him as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but come out of his grave. He does not say unto him, "move," for when by the grace of Christ we live spiritually, we must stir up ourselves to move. The grave of sin and this world is no place for those whom Christ has quickened, and therefore they must come forth. Thirdly, the event was according to the intention; he that was dead came forth. Power went along with the word of Christ to reunite the soul and body of Lazarus, and then he came forth. This is described, not by its invisible springs to satisfy our curiosity but by its visible effects to confirm our faith. Do any ask where the soul of Lazarus was during the four days of its

separation? We are not told, but have reason to think that it was in Paradise in joy and felicity. But you will say, "Was it not really an unkindness to it, to return it into the prison of the body?" And if it were, yet, being for the honor of Christ, and the serving of the interests of his kingdom, it was no more an injury to him than it was to Saint Paul to continue in the flesh, when he knew, that to depart to Christ was so much better. Do any ask whether Lazarus, after he was raised, could give an account or description of his soul's removal out of the body, or return to it, or what he saw in the other world? I suppose both those changes were so unaccountable to himself, that he must say with Paul, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell. And of what he saw and heard, that it was not lawful, or possible to express it.

In a world of sense we cannot frame to ourselves, much less communicate to others, any adequate ideas of the world of spirits, and the affairs of that world. Let us not covet to be wise above what is written concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, that he was dead and came forth. Some have observed that though we read of many who were raised from the dead, who no doubt conversed familiarly with men afterward, yet the scripture has not recorded one word spoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jesus only. First this miracle was wrought speedily, nothing intervenes between the command, "come forth," and the effect, he came forth, no sooner said than done; let there be life and there was life. Thus the change in the resurrection will be in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. The almighty power can do it in an instant. Then shalt thou call and I will answer, will come at the call as Lazarus. Second, the miracle was wrought perfectly. He was thoroughly revived that he came up out of the grave, as strong as ever he raised up out of bed; and returned not only to life but to health. He was not raised to serve a present turn, but to live as other men. Third, with this additional miracle (as some reckon it) that he came out of his grave though he was fettered with his grave clothes, with which he was bound hand and foot, and his face bound about with a napkin, for so the manner of the Jews was to bury, he came forth in the same dress wherein he was buried that it might appear that it was he himself and not another, and that he was not only alive, but strong and able to walk.

How little we carry away with us, when we leave the world, only a winding sheet and a coffin. There is no change of raiment in the grave. What condition we shall be in the grave, what wisdom or device can there be where the eyes are hood-winked or what working where the hands and feet are fettered. And so it will be in the grave whither we are going.

AWRY.

G. B. REPLOGLE.

In the past few months there has been some preaching in this vicinity, by different denominations, that seems worthy of no better name than the heading of this article. For example: one preacher asserted that there had never been a gospel sermon preached prior to the day of pentecost. Such preaching might go unchallenged were it not for the fact that the sentiment has its advocates also among the brethren. It is difficult to conceive how one can be so blinded to the truth in the face of the plain declarations of the sacred historians to the contrary. "Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm," (I Tim. 3: 7,) seems to be applicable to this case.

Matthew tells us that soon after the temptation and immediately after John was cast into prison, "Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." Matt. 4: 17, 23. See also Matt. 9: 35. These testimonies are confirmed by Mark 1: 14, and numerous other scriptures. These incidents took place more than three years before the memorable pentecost. Fortified by such specific declarations by the inspired writers, one would seem justified in believing those men had never read the gospel. What of the sermon on the mount? Will they say that was not preaching? Or, will they affirm that the sentiments of that sermon are not gospel? "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." Who with a grain of understanding would not say that such blessings coming from the mouth of the Son of God is not gospel—good news.

What shall we say of the seventy? whom he sent forth and instructed them, "Into whatsoever house ye enter first say peace be to this house * * and heal the sick * * and say unto them the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." May we not believe that the people to whom they were sent regarded such news as gospel? So diverse was the preaching of Christ and his disciples from the old order of eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, etc., that people inquired, "What new thing is this? What new doctrine is this?" And they were astonished at this new doctrine. One can scarcely comprehend the astounding blunders of these modern teachers with less amazement than that of the people who listened to the preaching of Christ and saw the won-